United Nations S/2008/125

Security Council

Distr.: General
22 February 2008

Original: English

Letter dated 22 February 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

At the request of the States members of the Great Lakes Region Initiative, I am annexing herewith the statement of the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, on the first anniversary of the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region (see annex).

As Uganda is Chair of the Great Lakes Region Initiative, I should be very grateful if the statement could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) L. B. **Lukwiya**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

08-25084 (E) 260208

Annex to the letter dated 22 February 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Uganda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

Statement of the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on the first anniversary of the signing of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region

15 December 2007

It is my great pleasure and honour to send you my warmest wishes on this very first anniversary of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region signed on 15 December 2006 by the leaders of our region.

On that memorable day, member States reaffirmed their commitment and determination to transform the Great Lakes region from a zone of hostilities, conflicts and underdevelopment into a zone of security, stability, shared growth and prosperity for our people.

The emphasis on collectively seeking and finding viable solutions for our people stems from the fact that the people of the Great Lakes region are indeed linked to one another through common history, culture, language, and experience.

Ever since, there have been positive developments as well as challenges in meeting the aspirations and the implementation of the vision of the people of the Great Lakes region as enshrined in the Dar Declaration and the Pact.

Progress has been registered in the area of peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional integration, humanitarian and social issues. In this regard, internally displaced persons and refugees are slowly returning to their homes, border conflicts are amicably getting resolved, leaders in the region are regularly meeting to review their challenges and progress, institutions for democracy and good governance are increasingly strengthened, and regional integration is taking shape among the member States. Most encouraging, the Pact is steadily being ratified and mechanisms for implementing are getting in place at national and regional level.

However, the region is still facing some challenges. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the security situation in the eastern part has deteriorated due to the continued presence of the armed groups and negative forces destabilizing communities. In Uganda, the peace agreement between the Government and the Lord's Resistance Army is not yet implemented. Likewise in Burundi the peace agreement signed between the Government and the last rebel movement Palipehutu-FNL is still limping.

The biggest humanitarian crisis of this decade is still taking its toll in the Darfur region. The northern part of the Central African Republic is still insecure, with activities of the popular Army for Restoration of the Republic and Democracy rebel group.

In addition to man-made disasters, the region was faced with problems of natural disasters such as floods and epidemics, Ebola and HIV/AIDS. This brings to the fore the need to renew our efforts to find a regional solution to the humanitarian, environmental and health concerns.

As we celebrate this first anniversary, I encourage all of you to familiarize and contribute to the implementation of the Pact. Indeed, the Pact provides a framework for durable solutions to the challenges facing our region.

It was my wish to have the Pact come into force as we celebrate this anniversary. It is still my dream. Only one country remains out of the eight that needs to have ratified the Pact before it enters into force.

There is hope.